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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of 47 members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 4 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

The Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretariat and has the honour to inform it that France has decided to put forward its candidacy for membership of the Human Rights Council during the election to be held on 9 May 2006.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 4 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

Candidacy of France for election to the Human Rights Council (New York, 9 May 2006)

Human rights form part of the core values of the French Republic. Respect for those rights is central to the exercise of democracy in France today and to the commitments we have undertaken within the European Union.

France, which has contributed to the work of the Commission on Human Rights since its establishment, is particularly committed to the international system for the promotion and protection of human rights. It has submitted to the Commission on Human Rights resolutions on arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and extreme poverty, which have been adopted by consensus, and has contributed to the strengthening of international law by presiding over the negotiations on the draft international convention for the protection of all persons from enforced disappearance.

France is committed to the establishment of the Human Rights Council as well as to strengthening the authority and resources of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and to mainstreaming human rights into the entire United Nations system.

France has ratified the main international human rights instruments and recognizes the competence of the treaty bodies to receive individual complaints.

The United Nations special procedures have a standing invitation to visit French territory. In 2005, for instance, France hosted the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and the Chairperson of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. Furthermore, as a member of the Council of Europe and of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), France receives visits from the regional mechanisms for the protection of human rights and is subject to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights.

France promotes dialogue and cooperation in the field of human rights. In keeping with its understanding that human rights are universal, France advocates an inclusive vision of human rights, in which engagement prevails over isolation. It will continue to increase its voluntary contributions to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which already stand at 2.15 million euros, in order to facilitate technical assistance, which must be one of the strengths of the new Human Rights Council.

In keeping with its vision of the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights, and with its desire for equitable and regulated globalization, France is committed to the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights. In particular, it supported the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which was adopted on 20 October 2005 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the draft declaration on bioethics and human rights.

France attaches particular importance to the realization of the right to development. Its commitment can be illustrated, in particular, by the partnerships for joint development and the cooperation agreements it has concluded with countries around the world. Together with several partners, it has also proposed the implementation of innovative mechanisms for development financing. It will continue to promote the broadest possible adoption of initiatives such as the international solidarity contribution on airline tickets.

1. **France pledges to contribute to the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Human Rights Council:**

- France undertakes to cooperate fully with the Human Rights Council and with all United Nations investigation mechanisms and to submit to the universal periodic review in order to promote a universal and equitable approach to the work of the Council.
- France undertakes to promote the activities, defend the independence and strengthen the role of the special procedures, the treaty bodies and all human rights monitoring and investigation mechanisms.
- France undertakes to work to guarantee and strengthen the right of non-governmental organizations and national human rights bodies to address the Human Rights Council.
- At the national level, it will continue to endeavour to implement the recommendations of the special procedures and the treaty bodies by working to improve conditions of detention, the effectiveness of criminal procedures and anti-discrimination policy.
- France is committed to ensuring that the Human Rights Council protects all rights. It will continue to support the drafting process for an optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of those rights and strengthening the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises.
- It will ensure that a gender and equality perspective is mainstreamed into all work undertaken by the Human Rights Council.

2. **France pledges to promote respect for international law and human life at all times:**

Reaffirming its commitment to respect for human rights while countering terrorism, the rejection of secret detention, and the absolute prohibition of the use of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment,

- France will continue to take action against arbitrary detention within the framework of the Council.
- It will promote the draft international convention for the protection of all persons from enforced disappearance with a view to its adoption. France will subsequently campaign for the signature and ratification of the convention. It undertakes to ratify the convention in the year following its adoption.

- During its term, France will ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

- By 2007, it will double its contribution to the United Nations Fund for Victims of Torture.

- France will pursue the campaign for the universal abolition of the death penalty. It will host the World Congress against the Death Penalty in Paris in February 2007.

3. **France pledges to support the victims of human rights violations:**

- It will continue to work for the recognition of the right to the truth and the right to reparation for victims of human rights violations.

- France is committed to fighting against impunity for the perpetrators of human rights violations and, as such, will make particular efforts to promote international criminal justice and the role of the International Criminal Court. It undertakes to disseminate as widely as possible the guiding principles of the United Nations on the fight against impunity.

- France will pursue sustained dialogue with human rights defenders in France and around the world and will continue to support their initiatives, the strengthening of protection for human rights defenders under threat and the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights defenders.

- France pays particular attention to child victims of human rights violations and strongly condemns all forms of violence and discrimination against them. Within the Security Council working group which it currently chairs, it will pursue its commitment to combating the use of children in armed conflicts. Together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), it will host in Paris in 2006 an international conference to complete the review of the principles for the prevention of recruitment, demobilization and the reintegration of children affected by armed conflict.

4. **France pledges to support initiatives designed to combat all forms of discrimination:**

- France will continue to work to ensure respect for all of the fundamental rights of women, the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against them, the representation of women in decision-making bodies and the recognition of their role in conflict prevention. It will lift several of its reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

- France wishes to promote dialogue among cultures and civilizations and to foster a spirit of tolerance and respect for individual freedoms. It supports initiatives such as the educational programme designed to prevent racial discrimination and genocide.

- In accordance with the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, it has established a High Authority to Combat Discrimination and Promote Equal Opportunities in France.

- France will work to promote the adoption of the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. In 2006-2007 it will host a visit by the Special Rapporteur on that question.

- France will work to ensure the early and successful conclusion of the negotiations on the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities in order to reaffirm the comprehensive nature of the rights enjoyed by all persons, regardless of any disabilities they may have.